

Carl Ketcherside's Pseudo Unity Move
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Carl Ketcherside was a young man preaching in Kansas when I first went into that state in 1932. Brother Ketcherside was a powerful preacher BUT he was a HOBBYIST of the most radical stripe. Churches were divided all over the state of the Midwest by his divisive theories and his baseless charges against his brethren. For many years he stayed behind his religious cloak and claimed immunity from religious discussion of his hobbies. He was pressed and challenged until he finally agreed to meet someone in an open discussion of his hobby. Hundreds will remember the famous debate at Paragould, Ark. This was almost the end of Carl Ketcherside. He agreed for one more discussion with G. K. Wallace in St. Louis, Mo., and there the Ketcherside theories about "anti-orphan homes" and his hobby on the college question died. Some had thought that even Carl would rest in peace with the digressives with whom he sought fellowship. But no, Carl is still on a hobby trail. He has launched out as the savior of the "brotherhood." He has come forth with a sweet, gentle, broad, church-saving and church-uniting plan. He has turned from one extreme to another and he now fancies himself as the modern-day Moses.

He made his first great attempt in a one-half Christian Church and one-half church of Christ, in Lakewood, Calif., during the fall of 1961. The church that invited him to Lakewood last fall is the church that Earnest Beam established after he was dismissed from the pulpit of the Central church in Long Beach, Calif., for his liberal, lenient and digressive attitudes and preaching. The church was a "half-and-half" from the start. It was a church with Bible music at the morning service but an organ, as Adam Clarke would say, "an organ—without the sanction and against the will of God"—was used in the evening service. This is the church that has invited this modern Moses to lead us out of the wilderness. Some of the young preachers who have fallen for this baseless preaching are too young to know the background of this theory, and some are so filled with the modern ecumenical church movements that they do not even know the meaning of the prayer of Jesus for unity. Many of these same brethren, with their preaching against "legalism," would be willing and very able to represent "us" at the unity table of the Pope next year.

Now comes a letter from the Rosemead Church of Christ (a Christian Church, they hasten to tell us) in Rosemead, Calif., inviting all segments of the brotherhood to another conclave next fall. Brother Ketcherside will be the chief speaker and they tell us in their pre-convention propaganda that "soul lifting a cappella singing" will be the order of the day. That is mighty nice of the host church. If they are so interested in unity, most of us have thought all along that the "instrument" is the chief test of fellowship; if they can give it up for this "unity meeting," why not try it for the rest of their lives? If they will do that, we can get on with our work.

This unity meeting; this Ketcherside ecumenical call; this sectarian invitation to participate in a love feast that will cover everything and touch nothing, will fool a few. Some preachers in Southern California have already yielded to the flattery and flirtations of these digressive moves and have all but left us. As soon as the churches know them for what they truly are, they will leave us, just as Earnest Beam, Ralph Wilburn, W. P. Reedy and others of the same type have done. Let these preachers tell the brotherhood what they really believe and what they really intend to do. One of them in Southern California conducted a meeting recently for a Christian Church. He had great success. About 50 were "restored." To what were they "restored"? They even left off the organ one night, out of respect for the preacher (God was not considered). It is reported that this liberal-minded brother was so pleased that he delivered this powerful (?) argument against the instrument. Here it is, brethren. It is a new one and my, what power. He said: "Now, don't you THINK that the singing sounds so much better without the instrument?" That must have restored and converted a multitude.

Brethren, you may do as you please. Attend these unity meetings if you like. No one can keep you away, but let me say this: If CARL KETCHERSIDE is honest and sincere and will share the platform half time with someone like G. K. Wallace, as he did at Paragould, Ark., Carl will either go all the way into Babylon or he will quit. For one, I want to say of this modern, liberal, blasé and divisive movement, I cannot endorse either the premise or the manner. It is simply the same dogmas of Murch, Witty, Beam, Wilburn and a dozen others like them who tried and failed with their unscriptural theories. Let us pray that we shall not have to fight this same battle in California again. Let elders, colleges, preachers and all beware: it is the same old wine in new bottles.

Lest someone say that I am hard and unchristian, I close by saying, "I love everyone." I love even the leaders of Moscow but I HATE what they stand for. Let each man speak for himself. It is time someone joined the editor of the Firm Foundation with a fervent Amen for his stand against this "PSEUDO UNITY MOVEMENT."

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